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The procurement phase includes all the activities necessary for the project office to develop a Request For Proposal (RFP) / Invitation To Partner (ITP), select a vendor, and award a contract to a prime contractor who can develop the system in accordance with the system requirement and master project plan.

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## Technical Feasibility

Proc Main

Project feasibility focuses on project management and overall coordination. When evaluating proposals, the following project feasibility items should be considered and evaluated:

- **System Performance** - Does the proposal describe what the system must do (functions) as well as how well the functions must be performed, such as transaction response time or throughput? Does the proposal indicate how the quality/performance of the functions will be monitored and evaluated? This criterion includes not only what the proposal states, but how well (and with what evidence) the claim is substantiated.
- **System Interfaces** - Does the proposal describe all the required data exchanges between the hardware, software, external systems, and human users of the system?
- **Development Processes** - Does the proposal describe the methodology that will be used to promote delivery of products, satisfaction of requirements and business objectives, and adherence to the schedule and budget? Do the development processes mesh with the project management processes?
- **Risk Assessment** - Does the proposal indicate which areas of the system the vendor feels are the riskiest or most complex? Have they indicated mitigation or contingency actions for the given technical risks? Has the vendor quantified the level of risk to the project?
- **Staff Qualifications** - Has the vendor adequately described the proposed staff's qualifications? Does the proposed staffing mix seem appropriate given the vendor's approach, project tasks, schedule and risk areas?
- **Failure Immunity** - This criterion describes the proposed system's ability to deliver the required levels of service, and how the robustness of the system to withstand errors and failures (hardware and software). Does the proposal describe what the system will do in the event of critical errors, and how critical services will be handled? Does the proposal include sufficient substantiation to support the approach? Is the approach reasonable for the business program, given the criticality of the business?
- **Customer Support** - Does the proposal adequately describe customer support functions? Such functions may include training, transition of users to the new system, responsiveness to requested changes, and user documentation and resources.
- **Security** - Does the proposal describe what measures will be taken to provide physical and data security? Do the measures seem appropriate for the type of data and assets?


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## Project Feasibility

Proc Main

Project feasibility focuses on project management and overall coordination. When evaluating proposals, the following project feasibility items should be considered and evaluated:

- **Management Processes** - Is the vendor proposing methodologies which promote effective control of a project? Are there regular statusing and reviewing of cost and schedule data? Does the vendor describe how they will manage the project and does the description clearly indicate the vendor is knowledgeable and comfortable in using the processes (e.g., are they consistently described throughout the proposal)?

- **Comprehensive Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)** - Is a WBS included? Does it depict the hierarchy of products and processes that comprise the proposed system architecture? The WBS is critical to managing the project. It is used in configuration management, resource allocation, requirements traceability, identification of changes, cost reporting and event-based scheduling.

- **WBS Traceability to the Proposed Design** - Does the WBS trace to the work products being designed and delivered? Is the level of detail commensurate with the complexity of the product (i.e., are the lower levels of the WBS appropriate)?

- **Planned Reviews and Audits** - Has the vendor included appropriate reviews and audits of their performance in the schedule? Are the reviews and audits occurring at the necessary key milestones in the project? Has the vendor discussed the level of participation and data expected from the project/State/users? Does the time for the reviews and audits seem reasonable for their purpose?

- **Planned Status Meetings and Data** - Has the vendor included appropriate status meetings and status data in their proposal? Is the level of visibility into the vendor's progress and processes appropriate? What level of participation and influence does the project/State have, if there are concerns with progress or status data?

- **IV&V Access to Project Data** - Does the vendor indicate that the will work with the project's/State's IV&V vendor cooperatively? Will they be given access to vendor data, staff, and processes?

- **Risk Management** - Does the vendor describe an active risk management process that is incorporated into all of its development and management processes? Are risk reviews and risk status mechanisms (both internal to the vendor and jointly with the project/State) discussed?


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## Cost and Schedule Feasibility

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When evaluating proposals, the following cost, schedule and maintenance items should be considered and evaluated:

- **Development Costs** - What is the total bid cost from start to full statewide deployment and transition to operational production status? Does this seem reasonable? It is best to perform some analysis of the costs to ensure they are reasonable. Consider use of such tools as SLMS or COCOMO II.

- **Time to Implementation** - What is the total elapsed time from project start to system roll-out? Is implementation performed over a period of time, or all at once? How long will it take to put the final system into production? What is the typical rate of change in the program (and user environment) that will occur during this time period?

- **Support Costs (with and without changes)** - What are the proposed on-going support costs for the system? This may include general maintenance and operations costs, as well as support for a stated level of functional changes over a given period of time.

- **Substantiated Cost Estimates** - Does the vendor provide sufficient data to verify their proposed costs? Do they explain any unclear estimates? Have they included assumptions and methodologies for their estimates? Consider use of such tools as SLMS or COCOMO II to verify the "reasonableness" of the proposed costs.

- **Documentation Quality** - Has the contractor proposed an appropriate amount of documentation given the system's anticipated complexity. Good documentation is essential to a cost-effective system and its supportability, particularly since third-party support or another vendor may end up helping to maintain or operate the system.

- **Business Process Effectiveness** - How effectively does the solution meet the business process needs of the users? Does the vendor understand the business and have they proposed effective and efficient methods for process redesign and implementation? Does the business process solution meet the business objectives? Are the proposed processes incorporated and compatible with the proposed system? If the new system requires workarounds or slows the business process, it will increase overall cost to the State.

- **Maintainable Design** - Does the proposed solution appear to be modular and maintainable? How difficult will it be to incorporate new functional requirements to the finished system? Has the vendor planned for periodic technology refreshes of the system (e.g., migrating to a new operating system version, or faster processor/system)? A system which does not plan for change and modification will be more costly to support and will create a need for greater training among new staff.

- **Open Standards/Open Systems** - Does the proposed solution make use of "open" IT standards and systems? Systems which use open standards are often more readily supportable in the long term due to the wide availability of compatible technologies and access to staff familiar with the technology.


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## Procurement Timeline

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The charts below show the current trends in large scale, complex procurements based on some of HHSDC's projects. The first shows a sampling of elapsed times required from the start of procurement planning through contract signatures. The second chart shows current data on the length and number of extensions for some of HHSDC's contracts.

Another **chart** showing both historical and projected procurement timelines is available for those that have Visio 2000. (Note that this 2-page chart is displayed on 11x17 paper.)

The purpose of these charts is to convey that very rarely does a procurement progress smoothly. One of the keys to staying on schedule during this complex phase is honest and frequent communications with stakeholders and control agencies. It is important they understand the approach, purpose, goals and tradeoffs of the specific procurement. It is also important that the project understand their concerns and needs, and try to reach an acceptable compromise.